

PETITIONS COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 24 April 2014. Minute of Meeting of the PETITIONS COMMITTEE.
Present:- Councillor Donnelly, Convener; Councillor Carle, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Delaney, Dickson, Lesley Dunbar, Graham, Grant, Kiddie, Malik, MacGregor (as substitute for Councillor Cormie), Nathan Morrison, Samarai, Stuart, Young (as substitute for Councillor Len Ironside CBE) and Yuill.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be located at the following link:

<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=484&MIId=3178&Ver=4>

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 19 SEPTEMBER 2013

1. The Committee had before it the minute of their previous meeting of 19 September 2013.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

WESTHILL CYCLE PATH IMPROVEMENTS

2. The Committee had before it the following petition which had been submitted by the Aberdeen Cycle Forum:-

“The Westhill Cycle Path provides a key link for cyclists between the area for Westhill and the Aberdeen City Centre. The Aberdeen Cycle Forum and the undersigned would like to see the path improved, in particular:

- (1) The narrow section of path near Prime 4 - either a new route must be constructed or the existing path should be brought up to cycling by design standards.
- (2) The required dismount / the need to cross the garage fore court at the 5 mile garage - either a new route must be constructed or a redesign of the through path at this point”.

The Convener explained the process and invited the lead petitioner to present their case to the Committee.

Ms Skinner, the lead petitioner spoke to the petition and advised that the current cycle route between Westhill and Aberdeen is well used by commuters coming into the City and expressed the view that the two areas identified above required to be improved for the safety of the cyclists and other road users who use that stretch of road. Currently

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the path is too narrow and forces cyclists to use the buffer area which is in place to provide a safe distance between the road and the cycle path. The area at the garage is currently impassable and cyclists are required to dismount and then cross the garage and due to the raised area and barriers, cycles have to be carried through that area.

Ms Skinner provided photographic evidence to show the extent of the problems and requested that the Council address these issues.

Officers advised on the current position with the area surrounding the cycle path, in particular the Prime 4 development, phases one to three of which were in the process of being completed with a planning application for phase four still to be submitted. At the phase four planning stage, developers could be approached to look at improving the cycle route however it was not known when this application would be submitted.

Councillors sought clarification as to whether there was an engineering solution to improve the route and whether the improvements to the route had been costed, whereupon Officers advised that to widen the cycle path would have cost implications for supporting the path using an embankment or other means of a barrier which would also impact on the trees along the path and that the improvements to the cycle path had not been fully costed.

The Convener, supported by the Committee requested that Officers look at the path and provide detailed information, including fully costed options on what measures could be carried out to improve the path. He also requested that general information on all of the cycle routes in Aberdeen be provided along with any details of planned major improvements to them.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to thank the petitioners for their attendance and presentation;
- (ii) to request officers in consultation with NESTRANS, to submit a report to the Enterprise, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee providing detailed information relating to the engineering and financial challenges with the proposed improvements to the Westhill Cycle Route at the Prime 4 development (increase the width of the cycle path) and the Five Mile garage (to improve the area where cyclists are required to dismount) and to include details of the current cycle path network within Aberdeen and any planned major improvements to them.

UNDER 18'S INVOLVEMENT IN PETITIONS

3. With reference to article 2, resolution (iv) of the minute of its meeting of 19 September 2013, the Committee discussed the current challenges with involving under 18's in the Petition process specifically on how the signatures could be collated and checked and whether there should be an under age limit. During the discussion

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the Committee agreed that all pupils should have the opportunity to participate and identified groups to be approached to gather their feedback on how young people could be involved with the process. Those included the Youth Council, Pupil Councils and the Pupil Voice.

The Committee resolved:-

to request officers to submit a report to a future meeting of the Petitions Committee outlining the options and progress for the inclusion of young people in the petition process.

- **COUNCILLOR ALAN DONNELLY, Convener.**